

PREFACE

Commonwealth Journal of Local Governance Issue 1: May 2008

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Welcome to this first edition of the Commonwealth e-Journal of Local Governance.

The Commonwealth Local Government Forum (CLGF) was set up in 1995 in response to moves towards greater decentralisation and local democracy in the Commonwealth. Since its inception, it has gone from strength to strength in pursuing its mission of promoting local democracy and good governance in the Commonwealth, supporting local government capacity-building and practitioners work, and maintaining a network of those working in or alongside local government to exchange ideas and best practice.

Commonwealth Heads of Government welcomed the establishment of CLGF at their meeting in Auckland in 1995 and CLGF's work has subsequently been acknowledged and endorsed at the biennial CHOGMs. In 2005 they recognised CLGF's *Aberdeen Agenda: Commonwealth Principles on Good Practice for Local Democracy and Good Governance* as an integral part of the Commonwealth commitment to fundamental political values.

CLGF believes that sharing experience, skills and ideas internationally is hugely beneficial to those who are involved in local government or in making local government policy. It encourages knowledge-sharing through conferences, seminars and events, through partnership projects and technical support and via its publications. Recent themes have included funding for local government, the inclusive city, local government and community leadership, and intergovernmental relations. The Commonwealth Local Government Good Practice Scheme is a major programme that links councils to work together on specific issues such as local government finance and revenue collection, economic development, and improving basic services such as water and sanitation.

CLGF currently has 180 members in over 40 Commonwealth countries. Mayors, council leaders, ministers, representing all regions of the

Commonwealth, come together on the CLGF Board and set the broad policy framework for the organisation.

As part of its membership, CLGF has a number of associate members representing training and research institutions across the Commonwealth with an interest in local government. They play an important role in CLGF, helping it bring together research and practice to deliver its objectives and remain focused and relevant to members' needs.

Associate members held a research colloquium in Auckland, New Zealand in March 2007 prior to CLGF's major event – the Commonwealth Local Government Conference (a biennial conference that brings together the movers and shakers in Commonwealth local government to discuss key issues and guide future policies and work). One of the outcomes of this colloquium was the idea to establish a Commonwealth e-Journal of Local Governance as a means of disseminating advances in research and practice and generating discussion amongst academics and practitioners in this field.

This first issue covers many topical and key themes from intergovernment relations to community indicators and neighbourhood governance to methods of delivering aid, as well as practitioner notes from projects in a number of our member countries. As the idea for the e-journal came about in Auckland, it is appropriate that there is an emphasis on the Pacific in this issue. The partnership between CLGF and researchers is especially evident in the CLGF Pacific Regional Project where our regional office works closely with the University of the South Pacific and universities in Australia and New Zealand.

We are grateful to the University of Technology, Sydney (UTS) for making its e-press facility available for the journal, to members of the editorial board, and to the contributors to this first edition for their hard work in getting the journal up-and-running. In particular I would like to thank Graham Sansom, Director of the Centre for Local Government at UTS and a member of the CLGF Board, for his enthusiasm and drive in putting together this first edition and providing the overall editorial direction.

I hope that you will find the journal stimulating and thought-provoking and look forward to your feedback. We also welcome appropriate contributions from our members and others for future issues.

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